

The President's Daily Brief

21 December 1971

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

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PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Pakistan's new President, Z. A. Bhutto, used his first speech to consolidate his support on several fronts. (*Page 1*)

On *Page 2* we discuss the military situation in northern Laos.

The Yugoslav Communist Party has quickly responded to President Tito's call for a shake-up to cope with regional nationalism. (*Page 3*)

Evidence is mounting that Panama's intelligence chief is protecting the drug traffic he is responsible for suppressing. (*Page 4*)

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PAKISTAN

President Bhutto used his first speech to the nation to consolidate support on several fronts.

--He vowed to "fight on" and refused to recognize the independence of Bangla Desh, thus bowing to demonstrators' demands for a continuation of the war but without actually risking a renewal of hostilities.

--He promised to restore democracy and to present a constitution for popular approval, but committed himself to no timetable.

--On the critical matter of military support, he indirectly criticized senior military officers by placing blame for Pakistan's plight on past authoritarian methods of government, and directed his praise of the military toward his "young friends in the armed forces."

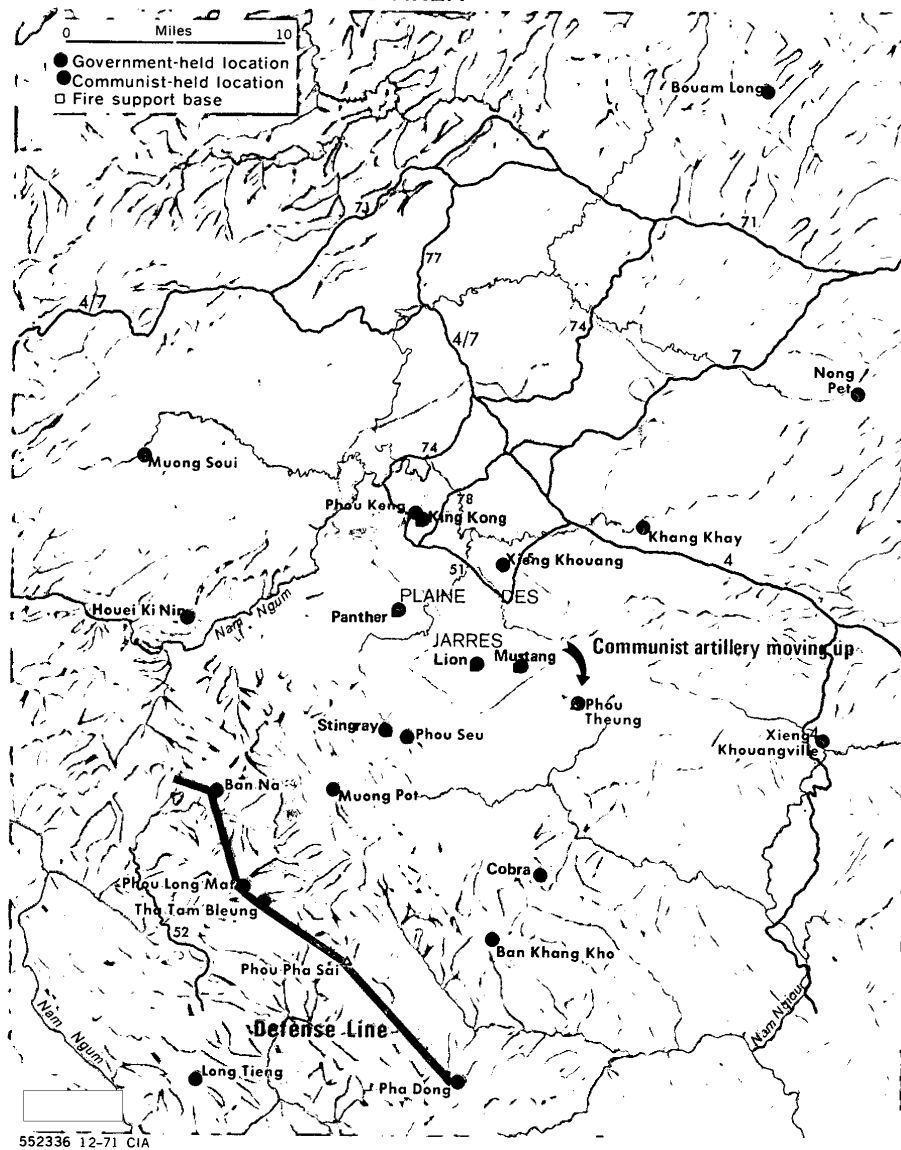
In a conversation with Ambassador Farland earlier in the day, Bhutto said he might go to Peking soon, explaining that China had not fulfilled its promises. At the same time he was effusive in his appreciation for assistance that Pakistan had received from the US. On domestic issues, he said that he would release any political prisoners.

The new President did not specifically mention his intentions in respect to Mujibur Rahman--a subject he also ignored in his speech. Bhutto is reported to have told a press conference that he needed more time to deal with the Mujib issue, while affirming that the Bengali leader is "alive and well."

In the East, some bus and rail transport has been restored and office staffs are beginning to resume their duties in Dacca. Many vengeance-seeking guerrilla fighters now have been disarmed and joint Mukti Bahini - Indian Army patrols have been established in many parts of the city. The press quotes a high Bangla Desh official as saying that the arrival of government ministers from India has been delayed due to "certain exigencies."

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LAOS: PLAINE DES JARRES AREA



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LAOS

Following the loss of all remaining fire support bases close to the Plaine des Jarres, Vang Pao is trying to rally his forces to establish a defense line running from a high point northwest of Ban Na through Phou Long Mat and Phou Pha Sai to Pha Dong. About 1,400 irregulars have been brought into the area

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Last night a sapper attack was launched on Long Tieng, causing damage to three aircraft and a few casualties. This morning a small sapper unit was reported to be surrounded about two miles from the Long Tieng airstrip.

The Meo irregulars evacuating the Plaine des Jarres are still in some disarray, and difficulties are being encountered in rallying them to form a temporary defensive line to hold until other irregulars can move off the Plaine. Meo civilians are pulling out of the Long Tieng valley, with perhaps one third of the 30,000 civilians moving toward the south.

The North Vietnamese are moving heavy artillery south into the Plaine and, according to an intercept of 18 December, were planning to move a SAM battalion into Laos yesterday.

The Communists have used their 130-mm. field guns with telling effect during the past three days. If the guns are moved into the southwestern part of the Plaine they could hit Long Tieng. The movement of SAMs, which have not previously been deployed in northern Laos, could be accomplished in a matter of days.

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YUGOSLAVIA

Yesterday the Communist Party presidium cut the number of each republic's representatives on the party executive bureau from two to one and announced that it would make some key personnel changes in those positions. According to presidium member Veljko Vlahovic, the new bureau will be composed of "younger officials" rather than "what we call older comrades."

These changes are responsive to President Tito's call in a speech on Saturday for an immediate reorganization of the party's top organs. Three years ago he created the executive bureau to divide authority among the nation's divergent nationalities and to ease the transfer of power after he leaves the scene, but in fact the bureau provided a platform for bickering. In his speech Tito justified last week's purge of Croatian nationalists by raising the specter of both foreign, i.e. Soviet, intervention and "civil war."

The party has also indicated that at a lower level it will emphasize the development of a disciplined, active cadre--an admission that the previously relaxed, behind-the-scenes guidance of Yugoslav political life had been no match for the rapid growth of regional nationalism. The concurrent emphasis on youth appears designed to buttress official claims that the current crackdown does not signify a return to orthodox Communism.

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PANAMA

Evidence is mounting that Lieutenant Colonel Noriega, the intelligence chief entrusted with stopping the narcotics traffic that runs through Panama to the US, may be actually protecting this traffic.

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The Torrijos government has reacted sharply to press reports that the US believes Panama is not paying sufficient attention to narcotics enforcement because of "high-level apathy, ignorance and/or collusion." Rather than correcting deficiencies, the government has taken the diplomatic offensive. Earlier this month the Foreign Ministry delivered and published a stiff protest to the US, and [redacted] alleged that charges of official Panamanian involvement in the narcotics trade were cooked up in an attempt to upset the canal negotiations.

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NOTE

West Germany: The government and the opposition have agreed on a timetable for parliamentary consideration of Bonn's treaties with the USSR and Poland. Although the ratification process will begin early in January, meeting constitutional requirements may delay the decision until June. The treaty debate brings to a head Brandt's long struggle with the Christian Democrats over his Ostpolitik. He has the votes needed for ratification, but the margin is a slim one and could be upset by the switch of only two deputies.

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